# Ensuring
# Common
# Access

**Story by Alisa Riggs**



The Army's CAC program, which is replacing the old military and civilian identification card system, is constantly evolving as more cards are issued. More than 700,000 Army personnel have been issued CACs since May 2001.

Beginning this month, soldiers and civilians alike will be required to log on to their computers using Common Access Cards, provided by their personnel centers.

WILL you be able to digitally sign or encrypt your email or control your electronic access with digital authentication?

The Department of Defense wants every soldier, civilian, and contract employee to accomplish these simple tasks by using the DOD Class 3 Public Key Infrastructure, or PKI, certificates stored on their Common Access Cards.

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PKI certification is an essential part of securing the Army's communication infrastructure. As PK-Enabled applications become the norm in such areas as the Defense Travel System and tighter security measures are

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enforced, Army leaders are taking steps to ensure their personnel are issued CACs.

"In response to the global war on terror, PKI and the CAC play will improve our ability to deliver solutions that safeguard access to DOD information without diminishing worldwide availability," said Betsy Appleby, program manager for DOD Public Key Enabling.

A card reader and middleware must be installed on a computer to use the CAC's resident PKI certificates. To use the reader, users must enter the personal identification numbers issued to them when they received the cards.

The lag in time between receiving the card and installing the reader can be months, and during this time many users have forgotten their PINs. This has led to other program initiatives by the Office of the Product Manager for

Secure Electronic Transactions-Devices and the Defense Manpower Data Center.

Together these groups have made significant progress in the development of a PIN-reset solution.

It is estimated that up to 50 percent of users will require CAC PIN resets.

LTG Peter Cuviello, the Army's chief information officer, has set Sept. 30 as the date by which all soldiers and Department of the Army civilians and contractors should have access to Army networks with CACs and card readers.

More than 700,000 Army personnel have been issued CACs since May 2001, approximately 700,000 card readers have been fielded and 5,300 Army personnel have been trained to install readers.

For more information on secure electronic transfers visit **https://setdweb.setd.army.mil**. Helpdesk support is available to those who have received CAC PKI training but need technical or installation assistance, or have additional questions about the CAC PKI process. The helpdesk number is (866) 738-3222.